

VZCZCXRO2066
PP RUEHROV
DE RUEHJM #2567 3481308
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 141308Z DEC 07
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0028
INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS JERUSALEM 002567

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

NEA/IPA FOR BELGRADE/PECCIA; NSC FOR PASCUAL
PLEASE PASS TO USAID FOR MCLOUD/RAGLAND

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [FAID](#) [ECON](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#)

SUBJECT: GAZA: STRAWBERRY EXPORTS LIMITED, CARNATIONS
CONTINUE

REF: JERUSALEM 2322

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Strawberries exported from Gaza this harvest have been of lower quality than previous years, reportedly as a result of the lack of fertilizer and poor handling procedures at the Kerem Shalom crossing. Gaza farmers continue to export cut carnation flowers, but have not been able to export bell peppers and tomatoes this harvest season, most of which have gone to waste. End summary.

Strawberries Limited; Flowers Still Moving

¶2. (SBU) Gaza-based USG contractors told Econoff that six truckloads of strawberries were shipped through Kerem Shalom crossing on December 13, the first such shipments since December 6. Gaza strawberry exports, which had begun on November 28 (reftel), were halted December 7-12 following a refusal by the marketing company to purchase additional shipments. The marketing company had reported that 50 percent of the strawberries purchased from Gaza were spoiling prior to delivery to points of sale in Europe.

¶3. (SBU) ConGen contacts believe that the strawberries' quality problems are a result of a lack of fertilizer, pesticides, and greenhouse supplies due to restrictions on imports into Gaza, as well as the transfer system at Kerem Shalom crossing, where shipments remain un-refrigerated for up to eight hours. Gaza's 250 strawberry farmers earned approximately USD 325,000 from exports over the November 28 - December 6 period. (By comparison, the last strawberry harvest totaled USD eight million in export sales.)

¶4. (SBU) Gaza farmers have exported roughly 1.4 million cut carnations, valued at USD 120,000, from Kerem Shalom crossing since November 28. According to Gaza-based contacts, the flowers require less fertilizer than the strawberries and are better able to withstand the crossing than strawberries due to their packaging.

Most Bell Peppers and Tomatoes Go To Waste

¶5. (SBU) There have been no shipments out of Gaza of bell peppers, cherry tomatoes, or sweet tomatoes this harvest. USG contractors in Gaza report that some peppers and tomatoes have been sold in Gaza for minimal prices, but that roughly 90 percent of this year's harvest has spoiled.
WALLES